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MISSIONARY RESEARCH LIBRARY NEW YORK CITY

THE JAPANESE SCRIPTURES.

CORRESPONDENCE IN REGARD TO THE CLAIM OF THE AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY TO THE OWNERSHIP OF THE JAPANESE TRANSLATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

A.

LONDON, *December* 22, 1882.

MY DEAR DR. GILMAN,—

Our Committee desire me to acknowledge your letter of the 3rd ult., which refers in part to the joint action of the three Bible Societies upon the Japanese Old Testament. We understand that your resolutions of April last, together with our resolutions of May, are under the consideration of the Permanent Committee, and that your Board does not wish to join us in the support of the Rev. P. K. Fyson until it learns the decision of that body, especially in regard to the position assigned to the Bible Societies as contributing to the production of the version.

Putting aside this question, with the hope that nothing may arise to interfere with our cooperation on the plan already provisionally agreed upon, I ask leave to turn to another subject on which our Committee are anxious definitely to know the mind of your Board.

The question of the Japanese New Testament appears to have been left by us in our correspondence at the point reached last January, when the Permanent Committee decided that your exclusive claim to the proprietorship of the text could not be conceded, and that the three Bible Societies possessed equal printing and publishing rights.

At the risk of going needlessly over old ground, let me note the stages of this long affair from the date of the publication of the New Testament. 1. An edition of the New Testament, with references by the Rev. J. Piper, was put to press by the agents of the British Bible Societies, whereupon you remonstrated (October 12, 1880) on the ground that the version belonged to you, as having been produced at your expense. In our reply (November 23, 1880) we expressed our inability to admit that in any due or formal way the proprietorship of the New Testament had passed into your hands; yet, looking at the broad fact that you had done the work and spent the money, we were prepared cordially to recognise the right thus established to the translation. 2. When the missionaries in Japan heard of this resolution, they reminded us

that we had treated the matter as though it concerned the Bible Societies alone and had ignored the Permanent Committee, a body representing the Tokio Convention of 1878, and through it the Yokohama Convention of 1872, out of which the work of New Testament translation sprang. They further informed us that, so far from your Society having "done the work," a large portion of the translation was due to the labour of one who was not at any time in your pay. On receiving this information, we wrote to you (July 15, 1881) that "it was not for us to pronounce upon the claim thus presented from Japan, but that, under the circumstances, we could not do other than suspend our recognition of your ownership until you had arrived at an understanding with the missionaries," and we continued, "Looking at the fact that the assertion of an exclusive claim to the copyright of the New Testament has raised so much division of feeling among Christian brethren in Japan, to the fact that the Convention of 1878 placed the Old Testament upon a catholic basis, and recommended that the work of translating and publishing the New Testament be brought into harmony with the principles now adopted in relation to the Old Testament under the supervision of one permanent Committee, our Societies would earnestly submit to your Board whether it would not tend to harmony and the highest interests of Bible work in Japan that the ownership and conservation of the text should be vested in that Permanent Committee, on which the three Bible Societies, as well as the various missions, are represented."

To this letter and invitation no official reply was made save a formal acknowledgment of its receipt, dated New York, August 5; but in a private letter to myself, dated five days later, you explained at length the position of your Board. The principal point in this letter was that you reverted to the compact existing between your Society and the British and Foreign Bible Society, in accordance with which "either Society may reprint translations of the Scriptures prepared and paid for by the other, on condition that in no case shall alterations, additions, or corrections be introduced into such translations without the cognisance and sanction of the Society to which they may respectively belong;" and you said you were sure your Board would cheerfully supply this Society on these terms with copies of the Japanese New Testament. We have, in reply, assured you that we hold as firmly as you do by a principle which is reasonable and in the interests of harmony; but that *we fail to see that this principle applies to the case of the Japanese New Testament.* For, granted the accuracy of the statement in your Report for 1880, page 29, that "the expense of making this (Japanese) version, amounting to many thousands of dollars, has been borne by the Bible and Missionary Societies of America," this does not meet Dr. Hepburn's refusal to acknowledge your claim to the text, nor does it explain how a work, which was started on a catholic basis, came to be taken up, during its progress, by one of the parties concerned, without any intimation being given to the others.

To return to the history. In January last the Permanent Committee resolved by 9 votes to 4 that your claim to the exclusive proprietorship—or let it be called "guardianship" as you suggest—could not be sustained, but that equal printing and publishing rights belonged to the three Bible Societies. Since then we have acknowledged that we were wrong in supposing that the Bible Societies were directly represented on the Permanent Committee, and

we have applied for seats on behalf of our agents. We are informed that this request is likely to be acceded to if presented by all the Bible Societies, but that you have instructed your agent not to apply until the decision of January last is revised or materially modified. We are unwilling to believe this report, and still more reluctant to believe that an attempt is being made in Japan to secure a reversal of that decision by altering the voting power of the members of the Permanent Committee.

We have sought to be loyal to the Permanent Committee in this matter. Usually the Bible Societies act as principals, and moral rights accruing to them from the sacrifices they make to produce versions of the Scriptures ought, we hold, to be recognised. But this is a peculiar case, where the body of missionaries originated the translation, and resolved to place it upon a catholic basis; and in this case it seems reasonable that the conservation of the text should be lodged with them. You ask whether a Bible Society is justified, after spending large sums on a translation, in committing it to the custody of a body on which it is not even represented. We reply, Are you seeking to be represented on that body? and have you reason to believe that the text will suffer if lodged with the Permanent Committee?

Our Committee desire me to express their regret that the subject should be left in what appears to them an unsatisfactory state. They have given recent proofs, in other fields, of their desire to work by your side, or even to leave you in occupation of the ground; and the negotiations for joint action in regard to the Old Testament in Japanese give hope that this cooperation may prevail in that land. But it must be placed in danger if, in face of the judgment of the Committee that represents all Protestant missionaries in Japan, and in face of the opinion of the sister Bible Societies, you maintain an exclusive claim, when it is seen that that claim does not involve the security of the text or the supply of copies to the people. Yet we observe that in your report for this year (page 51) you treat this version as one to which the rule of 1861 applies, and have invited Bishop Williams, Dr. Greene, and Dr. Verbeck to act as a special committee for determining on needful corrections, thus completely ignoring the Permanent Committee and the sister Bible Societies.

Our Committee desire me to say that they will carefully weigh any additional facts or considerations your Board may deem it well to lay before them; but that, while they would deeply regret to be forced into taking separate action, they must reserve to themselves the right to act upon the decision of the Permanent Committee of January last, as well as to print any new or revised text of the Japanese New Testament which may come before them, with the authority of the same body.

With kind regards,

I am, dear Dr. Gilman,

Yours very sincerely,

(Signed) Charles E. B. Reed.

P.S.—Since the above letter was written, it has been submitted to the Directors of the National Bible Society of Scotland, and adopted as the expression of their views.

B.

New York, *February 2d*, 1883.

My Dear Mr. Reed,—

Your esteemed favor of the 22nd of December last has had careful consideration from our Committee on Versions, and I am instructed by them to send you the following pages as the expression of their views on the points discussed in your letter.

It has been the position of the American Bible Society that the Japanese version of the New Testament was made at the sole expense of the Bible and Missionary Societies of America (Report, 1880, page 29), and that by the expenditure of several thousand dollars in the support of Dr. S. R. Brown and Dr. Greene, and by the investment of several thousand dollars in blocks and plates and printed sheets and books, the American Bible Society has come to have a large pecuniary interest in the work, and large responsibility for its conservation (letter to Permanent Committee, November, 1881), which interest and responsibility cannot be taken away without its consent, and ought not to be trenched upon without its leave.

While the underlying fact has never been denied, except inadvertently in the Annual Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society for 1880 (page 181), the claim based upon it has been controverted by certain parties in Japan and by correspondents of theirs in Great Britain.

A sufficient defence of the American Bible Society against all imputation of *exclusiveness* is furnished by the generous and considerate regard which it has shown from the outset to all who have had any desire to circulate this version, and particularly by the following facts :—

1. From the very commencement of his agency in Japan, Dr. Gulick was ready to share, and did share, his editions with the correspondents and agents of the Scotch and British Bible Societies to their hearts' content, even omitting to put his own stamp upon them.

2. When those Societies very honourably recognized the rights of the American Society, and telegraphed instructions to Japan to suspend the printing of an edition with references which had been commenced, the Board of Managers immediately requested them to carry their work through to completion.

3. And at present, in perfect accordance with propositions made by the British Society in 1861, Mr. Loomis is acting under instructions which provide for the largest liberty of republication.

But when the right of the American Bible Society to correct typographical errors in its own blocks and plates is called in question, and a claim is set up that the version itself is under the exclusive control of a committee of missionaries, in the selection of whom the Society has no voice, and further, that the Society has no rights and no responsibilities growing out of the fostering care bestowed upon the version for a long period of years, and no privileges save those which other parties may be pleased to accord to it, the necessity arises for considering the equities of the case, and for remonstrating respectfully against any unwarranted trenching on its rights.

Fortunately the British and Foreign Committee, no less than the American Bible Society, hold to the general principle (which has been strenuously denied in

Japan) that a Bible Society, by expending funds to produce a version of the Scriptures, may honourably acquire some sort of proprietorship in the result, and that rights so acquired are not to be trenched upon without its leave. Mr. Reed's letters to Mr. Taylor, of Yokohama, during 1882, leave no doubt on this point, and if the British missionaries in Japan had understood years ago that their national Society believed that "an adherence to the commercial rights which it had acquired was the best method of avoiding complications and disputes afterwards," some of their fears might have been soothed, and some of their censures withheld.

But the British Society, while holding to the general principle, shrinks from its application here because the case is *peculiar*, inasmuch as a committee of missionaries appear as rival claimants, asserting exclusive right to the custody of the version, on the ground that the American Society never had any peculiar rights in it, or else has lost them.

Admitting that such a condition of things is not altogether satisfactory, it only adds to the embarrassment and complication for the British and Foreign Committee, who expended nothing in the production of the version, and who have received most courteous treatment from the American Society, to claim adverse rights even to the extent of printing a revised edition without regard to the sanction of the parties who made it.

If the British and American Societies are agreed concerning the fact that the translation was made by American Societies alone, without pecuniary aid from Great Britain, and in the principle that some rights and responsibilities are vested in those at whose cost a version is perfected, the question remains whether those rights have been forfeited or surrendered.

It is admitted that certain mutual stipulations, adopted in 1861 by the British and American Societies, are still in force, which entitle either Society, upon complying with certain conditions, to print versions belonging to the other, without changes in the text or accessories; also, that by special vote of the Board of Managers, the publication of a New Testament with references was sanctioned; and that their Japan agent has been authorized to allow the liberty of reprinting the version without change by any persons asking for leave. (Annual Report, page 31.)

But it is maintained that, apart from these concessions, the American Bible Society has neither yielded nor been deprived of any rights and responsibilities accruing from its expenditures.

On the other hand, however, a claim is set up that the American Bible Society never could acquire any rights in the completed version, because the original projectors of the work, in the Yokohama Convention of 1872, put it on a distinctively *catholic basis*.

That the work projected at Yokohama in 1872 was designed to be catholic to such an extent that any undenominational Bible Society might consistently circulate it, admits of no doubt. The constitution of the Committee was also catholic in the signification given to the word by the late Dr. S. R. Brown, who wrote, November 6, 1876, as follows: "Its catholicity does not consist in the common right of all Bible Societies to publish at their pleasure the version made by the Committee, but in the common right of the missionaries to be represented in the Committee." But the *resolutions of the Convention* are silent as to any arrangements for meeting the cost of the version, or for its conservation when

complete. (See Annual Report for 1873, page 111.) And certainly the announcement of its action to the Bible Societies gives feeble support to the claim that the contemplated version would be free to any Society to do what it liked with it.

But, in fact, the work had been in progress long before 1872, and already, in the course of twelve years, the American Bible Society had appropriated between five and six thousand dollars to various missionary societies of the United States to promote the translation and publication of the Japanese Scriptures. What was more natural than that the same mail which brought the report of the Convention, brought also an application for a new grant to aid the Committee then constituted? an application which was at once, in November, 1872, granted. Appropriations for the incidental expenses of the Committee and for the payment of native teachers continued to be made until 1875, when the Society, having already expended nearly $10,000 for Japan, yielded to the earnest appeal of the American and the Reformed Boards, and assumed the personal support of Dr. Greene and Dr. S. R. Brown, who, together with Dr. Hepburn, had been designated in 1872 as a Translation Committee. What could be more reasonable than that, in asking for so large an outlay as this arrangement involved, these Missionary Boards should transfer to the Bible Society their proprietary rights in the version which their missionaries were making? No new principle was invoked. At that very time the British and Foreign and the American Societies were paying for the services of several translators in Constantinople, with the understanding that the Turkish version on which they were engaged was to be, while in progress and when complete, the property, not of the individual translators, nor of the world at large, but of the two Societies at whose expense it was made. The application of the same rule at Yokohama was a matter of course.

In this way it happened, very naturally indeed, that the American Bible Society, which was bearing so large a part of the cost of translation, came to have a recognized interest in it, while the British and Foreign, which is not known to have paid anything for its production, failed to acquire any corresponding rights.

It is further claimed that the Convention of Missionaries, held at Tokio in 1878, in the exercise of power inherent in it as the successor of the Convention which met at Yokohama six years before, entrusted the conservation of the New Testament text to the "Permanent Committee," which it caused to be established. In other words, it is asserted, in effect, that the simple vote of a convention, without the assent of the Society asked or given, took away all its rights and responsibilities, and put them under the absolute control of a committee in which the Society had not even a single vote. The unreasonableness of such a claim is apparent. But this claim overlooks several facts:—

1. That the Yokohama Convention of 1872 made no provision for reassembling or for a successor.

2. That the Convention at Tokio did not assume to be the successor of the former.

3. That the Tokio Convention was not called to take any action respecting the New Testament, but simply to consider the subject of translating the *Old Testament*, and to arrange for the systematic prosecution of *that work*.

4. That the Tokio Convention did not assume that it had any right to direct concerning the New Testament versions then nearly complete, and did not give any direction respecting its publication or conservation.

5. That both Dr. Greene and Dr. Gulick cautioned the Convention against taking any action which would interfere with the rights of the American Bible Society; and

6. That the Convention, fully aware that the work of the Yokohama Committee was outside of its control, contented itself with the expression of an opinion as to what *ought* to be done with it. The attempt to secure any action on the subject of the New Testament version was unfortunate, and "after strife and debate the Convention broke up under a cloud."

There was one way by which the Permanent Committee might acquire a right to control the version, and that was to get it from those to whom it really belonged; but this they have not done. Long after their appointment they did at last, in 1881, appeal to the American Bible Society, and ask whether it "would not generously consent to relinquish its claim to the proprietorship of the Japanese New Testament, and allow it to be vested in the Permanent Committee, to be disposed of and used as directed by the resolutions of the Convention of 1878, and thus obviate the danger and harm of a division of the Protestant missionaries in this small empire into two conflicting parties."

To this question answer was made, by the direction of the Board, that careful consideration had been given to the request in connection with the history of the case, and that "the Committee on Versions and the Board of Managers deem it to be inexpedient for the American Bible Society to divest itself of its responsibility for the guardianship of the Japanese version, which it has so liberally supported; but recognizing the desirableness, on the one hand, of encouraging the widest circulation of a version so acceptable, and on the other, of guarding against competitive editions and unauthorized changes, they have authorized the agent of the Society in Japan to give the consent of the Board to the publication of editions of the New Testament, on condition that no changes or additions be introduced into the version without the cognizance and sanction of the American Bible Society."

But it is now claimed that the Permanent Committee had already, years before, acquired full control of the version by the act of Dr. Hepburn in putting the manuscript into their custody.

What Dr. Hepburn may have done, or assumed to do, he has never reported to the American Bible Society; but as an offset to this claim it is sufficient to say—

First.—That neither the Translation Committee as a whole, nor any member of it, ever had the authority of the Societies which made and owned the version, to transfer their rights and responsibilities either to the British and Foreign Society or to the Permanent Committee. In respect to any such transfer the American Bible Society was never consulted; and

Second.—That letters from the principal translators, extracts from which are here appended, show that as long ago as 1876, each one of them, and the Committee as a whole, distinctly recognized the relation of the American Bible Society to the version on which they were then employed.

1. On the 24th of April, 1876, Dr. Greene wrote as follows:—

"When we learned that the American Bible Society was ready to meet

all the expenses of translation on the conditions mentioned in their rules, we, of course, saw that if we accepted such aid we must refer all applications for permission to reprint the results of our work to yourself, either directly or through Dr. Gulick. *We all*, I think, *appreciate the reasons* which led the managers of the Bible Society to wish to maintain its right of property in the translations made by its representatives, and are ready to do all we can to aid them in doing so."

Then, after referring to the proposal of the new agent of the Scotch Bible Society to issue an edition of the Gospels at a price so low that it would be worth while to buy them up for waste paper, he adds:—

"Mr. Mateer, of Shanghai, under instructions from Scotland, sent to Dr. S. R. Brown recently, asking him to furnish a copy of the Gospel of Luke, and to employ a proof-reader for him. *The letter was laid before our Committee, and Dr. Brown was requested to reply that we had no authority* to grant permission to any one to republish our work, and suggesting that the Scottish Bible Society should correspond with the American Bible Society."

2. A few days later, May 9, 1876, Dr. Hepburn wrote:—

"We quite agree with Dr. Gilman that it would be a great want of courtesy for them [the other Bible Societies] to do so ["publish our translations"] without first consulting with the A. B. S. and *recognizing their right to the version*, and the *Committee has so replied* to the Scotch B. S., and intend, when the proper time comes, to say so to the gentlemen who represent the B. & F. B. S."

3. In September of the same year, Dr. S. R. Brown wrote:—

"The Committee, through me as its chairman, promptly rejected the proposal of Mr. Mateer. . . . I told him that our *versions were the property of the American Bible Society*, and courtesy required that he should make application to that Society for leave to do what he wanted, as we were not authorized to consent to his request."

4. Again, on the 9th of November, referring to a request of Mr. Wright to be supplied with copies for the press, Dr. Brown said:—

"As chairman of the Translation Committee I was requested to reply to Mr. Wright, telling him that we had no right to comply with his request, because the version we are making *is not our property, nor that of the missions to which we belong*, but that the American Bible Society had acquired the right to dispose of the version by reason of its having paid *the expense of the work done by the Committee so far as the pay of native assistants and the cost of printing* is concerned. I did not *mention* that the Rev. D. C. Greene's entire expenses have also been paid by your Society for the last year."

5. And again, January 21, 1877, he wrote:—

"At a meeting of the Committee this morning, a letter was read from Mr. Robert Lillie, agent of the National Bible Society of Scotland, in which he again asks permission, by direction of his Society, to use the Committee's new translations and versions. . . . The only reply we can make is that, as a Translation Committee, whose expenses have been so largely defrayed by the American Bible Society, *we are not authorized* to dispose of the version we are making, and must refer the inquirer to your Society for an answer."

If, therefore, either Dr. Hepburn or the Translation Committee did what is now imputed to them, their action was thoroughly inconsistent with their previous

declarations and acts. And surely no reasonable man will hold that an unauthorized act of theirs could alienate the rights of the American Bible Society, or justify other parties in trenching upon those rights without its leave.

This Society makes no claim which it does not believe to be founded in justice; and it would be a matter of profound regret if any sentiment of loyalty to the Permanent Committee should lead the respected Committee of the British and Foreign Society to lend their influence to the support of claims which have no valid foundation, and to accept in return a defective title to a translation, to which the American Bible Society presents a prior and vastly stronger claim.

With high esteem, I remain,

Very truly yours,

EDWARD W. GILMAN,

Cor. Sec., A. B. Soc.

C.—Extract from the Minutes of the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society, February 19, 1883.

It was *resolved,* with the concurrence of the Directors of the National Bible Society of Scotland:—

1. To acknowledge the receipt of the letter of the American Bible Society.

2. To send a copy of the same to Dr. Hepburn, inviting his opinion upon the points raised in it, and especially on his alleged recognition in 1876 of the American Bible Society claim.

3. To instruct the agents of the British Bible Societies in Japan that, pending further correspondence, they are not to act, for the present, upon the resolution of the Committee to print any new or revised text of the Japanese New Testament which may be brought before the Societies with the authority of the Permanent Committee.

D.—Extract from the Minutes of the Board of the National Bible Society of Scotland, March 5, 1883.

Having considered letters from the B. and F. Bible Society, of dates 15th and 20th February, and copies of communications from Dr. Gilman, of date 2nd February, in reply to joint letter of 22nd December last the Committee agreed:—

1. To concur with the British and Foreign Bible Society in courteously acknowledging receipt of Dr. Gilman's letter, and in assuring him that it will have the best attention of the British Societies.

2. To join the British and Foreign Bible Society in transmitting to Dr. Hepburn a copy of said letter, and in inviting his opinion on the points

raised in it, and especially on his alleged recognition in 1876 of the American claim; and

3. To suggest that the British Societies should not withdraw any part of their joint letter of 22nd December last, but should instruct their agents in Japan, in the hope that when the translation of the Old Testament is completed this vexed question may be settled in a manner satisfactory to all concerned.

The Committee further agreed:—

4. To suggest that in acknowledging Dr. Gilman's communication as above, an effort should be made to induce the American Bible Society—without prejudice to questions affecting the New Testament—to unite with the British Societies in carrying out arrangements for the translation of the Old Testament, and under the direction of the Permanent Committee (on which the three Bible Societies may, if they will, be represented), and on the basis approved by this Society in June last, so that the three translators, Dr. Verbeck, Dr. Hepburn, and Mr. Fyson, may be encouraged without further delay to apply themselves vigorously to their great work.

E.

London, *March* 16, 1883.

The Rev. Dr. Hepburn, Japan.

My Dear Sir,—

By desire of our Committee, and with the concurrence of the Nat. Bible Society of Scotland, I send you a copy of a letter recently received from America in reply to a joint letter from the two Societies. They desire to hear direct from yourself, if they may, the position which you (and your Society?) take up as regards the claim of the A. B. S. to the undivided proprietorship or guardianship of the text of the N. T. in Japanese. Is the A. B. S. the recognised heir to the Bible labours of all American *Missionary* Societies, as well as to its own express translating work?

Please give us your opinion on the points mentioned in Dr. Gilman's letter, and especially your own alleged recognition in May 1876, of the A. B. Society's claim.

(Signed) John Sharp.

F.

YOKOHAMA, *May* 30, 1883.

Rev. JOHN SHARP, M.A.,

Sec. of B. & F. B. S.

DEAR SIR,—

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of March 16, 1883, enclosing a copy of a letter from Dr. Gilman, Sec. of the American Bible Society, in which you express a "desire to hear direct from me the position which I, and the Society which I represent here, take up as regards the claim of the A. B. S. to the undivided proprietorship or guardianship of the text of the New Testament in Japanese. Is the A. B. S. the recognised heir to the Bible labors of all the American Missionary Societies, as well as its own express translation work?"

You also ask me to explain my "alleged recognition of, in May 1876, the A. B. S.'s claim."

In replying to the first question, I do not know that I can do better than to refer you to a "Report of the Committee" appointed by the Board of For. Missions of the Presbyterian Church, to consider and report on this subject to the Board. I herewith send you a printed copy of this Report, and have underscored some places * which I wish you to notice as replying directly to your question.

This report gives a truthful history of the formation and relations of the so-called "Yokohama Translation Committee;" the claim of the Am. Bible Soc. is thoroughly examined, and the position of the Missionary Soc., which I represent, clearly defined. You may confidently accept it as expressing, not only my own judgment of this matter and that of our mission in this country, but also that of the "Permanent Committee," and of a very large majority, almost unanimous, of the foreign missionaries in this country, both American and British, who have given the subject any consideration.

To mention a little more explicitly the main points in the argument, I may say—

That the Yokohama Committee was a committee appointed by a convention of all the Protestant Miss. Societies then represented in this country. It was composed of six members—four American and two English. As a Committee it never at any time considered itself as belonging to, or working in the interest, or under the authority, of the Am. Bible Soc. It never, as a Committee, had any correspondence with the A. B. S., nor made any report to it. What one or two of its members may have written privately to the A. B. S. had no official sanction, and did not compromise the Committee in any way.

That it was more than a year after it had commenced its work, and had already published, by private subscription, the four Gospels and the Epistle to the Romans, when the A. B. S. at its *own request offered* to pay the salaries of those engaged in the work of translation, as well as bear the expenses of its

* See Appendix No. VI. The underscored passages are given in italics, and Dr. Hepburn's remarks are enclosed in brackets.

publications. That the Committee in accepting the offer of the A. B. S. did not thereby subordinate itself, or transfer its work to that Society to be held as its peculiar property, or thereby or in any manner make such a contract with it. This is acknowledged by Dr. Brown, even though he was in the pay of that Society (*see Appendix* 4).

That the Yokohama Committee did of its own accord and officially, some time before the completion of its work in April 1879 (*see Appendix* 1), come under the authority of the Permanent Com. in accordance with the recommendation of the Convention of 1878, and did bring out, report and publish the Epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, 1st and 2nd Thessalonians, Colossians, Philemon, the Epistles of James, Peter, Jude, and the book of Revelation under its authority. That the whole of the so-called "Standard Edition"—the authorized version—of the New Testament was revised by the "Revising Committee" appointed by the Permanent Com. of the Convention of '78, and was published under its auspices and by its authority. In confirmation of these statements I have transcribed from the records of the Permanent Com. (*see App.* 2 *and* 3).

From these documents it will be clearly seen that when the present authorized version of the New Test. in Japanese was published by Dr. Gulick, the agent of the A. B. S., it was done by the authority of the Perm. Com., and by an express mutual arrangement with the agents of the other Bible Societies, and in their joint interest. It thus appears that the A. B. S. in persistently adhering to this claim, ignoring the right of the Perm. Com., and refusing to allow the other Bible Societies an equal right to publish, has taken forcible possession of the plates, and unjustly usurped the rights of others, a claim which could not stand the test of a court of law, much less that of calm and enlightened Christian judgment.

The whole question hinges upon the point whether the money expended by the A. B. S. under the above-mentioned circumstances gives it this sole right of proprietorship, and takes it from the missionary body in Japan, by whom the translation was inaugurated, carried through, and finished. As well might the A. B. S. or the B. and F. B. S. lay claim to be the sole proprietors, or of having the sole right of conservation of the text of the present authorized English Bible. The Presbyterian Board of For. Miss.—the Society to which I belong—has never acknowledged this right. The Permanent Com. also has never receded from its claim, but being without funds it has cheerfully left the publication of its work to the Bible Societies, to which this part of the work especially belongs, and would be glad to see all the Bible Societies participating in it, in accordance with Resolution 6 of the Convention of '78.

Dr. Gilman's letter, it seems to me, is a very good specimen of special pleading, and might impose upon any one who heard only his side. I cannot let it pass without an attempt to explain some of his statements, and animadverting upon some of his phraseology. His statement that the A. B. S. had appropriated some $5,000 to the various Am. Miss. Socs. before 1872 to promote the translation of the Scriptures, and before 1875 $10,000 in the same way, needs explanation. The Miss. Soc. may have received this money, but was it spent in the translation or publication of the Scriptures? Certainly not in this country. Dr. S. R. Brown was the only person who, before 1872, had used any of that money—about $100 a year, for three or four years at the most, to his

Japanese teacher. As for myself I never knowingly spent any of the A. B. S.'s funds in this way; and as for the Am. Episcopal Miss. Soc., I send you a note which I received from Bishop Williams on this subject (*App.* 5).

The phrases "earnest appeal" and "fostering care" cannot mislead any one but the uninitiated.

The statement "that the Tōkiyō Convention was not called to take any active part respecting the New Test.," etc., is incorrect. The first call for a Convention was, no doubt, so worded, and was intended only with reference to the O. T., but there was such a decided opposition to that restriction that a *second call* was made out, so as to include "all matter of common interest," and it was well known that this was intended to include the work on the N. T. as well, and it was in compliance with the second call that the Convention met.

Dr. Gilman's denial of the right of the Yokohama Com. to hand over its work to the Perm. Com. is fully answered in the first part of this letter.

It is well known that the words "ought" and "recommend," used in the Resolutions, and by which Dr. G. seems to strengthen his argument, were used only out of respect to the older men connected with the Yoko. Com., and not out of any regard to the claim set up by the A. B. S.

The quotation that "The Convention broke up under a cloud," etc., is from the letter of a Committee of British Missionaries, where it appears that all "the strife and debate" that arose in this company of Christian men was caused by *this claim* of the A. B. S.

The request made to the A. B. S. by a committee of the Perm. Com. that it "would generously consent to relinquish its claim," etc., was not because it recognized the claim of the A. B. S., but was a christian appeal to a dog-in-the-manger spirit, in persuasive and kind words, hoping thus to modify its obstinacy and prevent discord and confusion in the missionary body and native churches in this country.

How, it may be asked, is the A. B. S. to "conserve and guard the text" of the Japanese version of the N. T. except through missionaries on the ground? Is a society ten thousand miles distant any more anxious to keep the text pure and inviolate than the whole body of Christian missionaries of different sects residing and working in this country? Such expressions must be taken for what they are worth.

I beg here to correct a statement which first appeared in the "statement of the Tokio Com. of British Miss." to the effect "that he (Dr. Greene) appears to have handed the complete MS. to Dr. Hepburn, who has stated publicly in the Perm. Com. that he now holds it for them, and that he has refused to give it up to the A. B. S., though pressed by them to do so." I must say that I have no recollection of any such occurrence; I am sure it is a mistake. Drs. Greene and Maclay were the publishing committee of the Yokohama as well as of the Perm. Com. After the MS. left the Committee for publication I seldom saw it until it appeared in type. I know not what became of it afterwards; I certainly did not have it in my possession.

As to my letter to Dr. Gilman, in which I appear to have acknowledged the right of the A. B. S., I may say that I had not then given the subject much thought, was perhaps somewhat influenced by national sympathies, and did not foresee the magnitude of the question, or the principles involved, and was desirous of main-

taining cordial relations with the other members of the Committee and did so write to Dr. G., and a good deal more which he is equally careful not to quote, as it was in vindication of my independence of the A. B. S.

There is no doubt that to the Permanent Com. belongs the right and duty of conserving the text of the SS. in this country, and it seems reasonable to think that any Bible Society would be pleased with this arrangement, would be glad to be free from such a responsibility, and confine itself more exclusively to its appropriate work, to which there is in this country a large and inviting field.

I trust that ere long this long controversy may be brought to an amicable conclusion. The issue must rest with you. We in Japan are pretty well united in our judgment upon this matter. Younger missionaries coming in, who have not known the history, and given the subject no thought, with their fresh home feelings are apt to be influenced by national sympathies; and thus the question is apt to become more and more a national one, and discord to arise in the Perm. Com. itself.

The A. B. S., I see by home papers, has also been abetting a scheme for translating the O. T. recently got up by some of the young Japanese Christians, in opposition to the mode of doing it by the Perm. Com. I have not heard anything about it lately, and expect it has been abandoned.

The translation of the O. T. goes on steadily, but slowly. The book of Proverbs has been published; 1st Samuel is now in the press; 2nd Samuel is in the hands of the Revising Com., and will be ready for publication very soon. The book of Genesis is also in the hands of the Rev. Com., and will, I trust, be out this year, as also the book of Jeremiah, the translation of which will be finished to-day or to-morrow, but which will not be ready for the press much before the end of the year. Other books of the O. T. have been translated, as 1st and 2nd Kings and part of Isaiah, but not yet been revised. The Psalms, we hope, also will be published this year.

I am, dear sir,

Very sincerely yours,

J. C. Hepburn.

APPENDIX No. I.

Copy of a letter from Dr. Greene, *Sec. of the Yokohama Trans. Com., to* Rev. J. H. Quimby, *Sec. of the Perm. Com.*

Yokohama, *April* 25, 1879.

Rev. J. H. Quimby,

Sec. of the Perm. Com., Tokiyo.

Dear Sir,—

At a meeting of the Yokohama Trans. Com. held yesterday, the following action was taken:—

"Whereas, at the time the Convention of Missionaries held in Tokiyo in May, 1878, recommended that the work of translating the New Testament be brought into harmony with the principles adopted in relation to the Old Testament, certain obstacles prevented an immediate response on the part of this Committee, and whereas, now that those obstacles have been happily removed, it is fitting that formal action should be taken with reference to that recommendation, therefore,

"Resolved, that this Committee takes pleasure in complying with the request of the Tokiyo Convention, as expressed in the resolutions passed by that body in relation to the translation of the New Testament, and in placing its work upon the same basis as that of the other committees working in connection with the Permanent Committee.

"A true Copy of the Record,

"(Signed) D. C. Greene, *Secretary.*"

APPENDIX No. II.

In the record of a meeting of the Permanent Com. in Yokohama, March 1, 1879, I find the following minute:—

"The Revising Com. reported that they had formally approved and recommended for publication the Epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, 1st and 2nd Thessalonians. The Report was adopted, and the Rev. D. C. Greene and R. S. Maclay, D.D., were appointed a Committee to arrange for and superintend the publication of all translations which may be adopted by the Perm. Committee."

"(Signed) Hamilton Quimby, *Sec.*

J. C. Hepburn, *Chairman.*"

I remark on the above that the Revising Com. mentioned was a Committee appointed by the Permanent Com.

J. C. Hepburn.

APPENDIX No. III.

At a meeting of the Perm. Com. in Tokiyo on December 16, 1879, amongst other business, the following I extract from the record of that meeting :—

"The remaining portions of the New Testament as yet unpublished, viz., Epistles to Colossians and Philemon, Pastoral Epistles, James, Peter, Jude, and Book of Revelation, in all ten portions, were presented by the Revising Com. and accepted by the Perm. Com. The Revising Com. were authorized to revise the other portions of the N. Test., supply more Chinese characters, correct erroneous kana, and make such other emendations as they should think fit.

"Dr. Greene, from the Publication Com., reported that an arrangement had been made with the representatives of the Bible Societies, by which Dr. Gulick would print in their behalf the remaining portions of the translation of the New Testament."

(Signed) Hamilton Quimby, *Secretary.*

J. C. Hepburn, *Chairman.*

APPENDIX No. IV.

Copy of a letter written by Dr. S. R. Brown *as Chairman of the Yokohama Trans. Com., and dated 6th Nov.*, 1876.

"I cannot see that it was wrong for us to accept that offer (of the A. B. S.). All that is said about the Committee making over the copyright to the American Bible Society is unintelligible to the Committee, that is, to those resident here. They had no copyright to transfer. They did not at the time know what the rules of the American Bible Society were."

APPENDIX No. V.

Note from Bishop Williams.

Tokio, *May* 17, 1883.

My Dear Dr. Hepburn,—

Your question is perfectly proper, and there is no objection to giving you an answer.

Mr. Thomson, our Treasurer in China, gave me, July 11, 1875, $2,430·59, which he said had been sent out by the A. B. S. for Japan. This money

remained in Yokohama, drawing interest at 9 per cent. till April 15, 1877, when the balance, $2,527·19, was paid over to Dr. Gulick. While it was in my hands I paid to Rev. D. C. Greene, for St. Luke's Gospel, $125·00, and for Romans, $50·00; to Rev. J. H. Ballagh, for Gospels, $30·00; to Presbyterian Mission, Shanghai, $59·40. This statement seems to cover the enquiry made in your note. I am sorry to learn that the A. B. S. is not willing to let the matter rest quietly, without attempting to press any claim which it may have or may think it has.

Please accept my thanks for your very kind invitation. I shall try to call on you when I go to Yokohama. I am sorry that I missed your visit when you called, and hope you will call again when you come to Tokio. Remember me very kindly to Mrs. Hepburn, and

Believe me,

Yours very sincerely,

C. M. Williams.

APPENDIX VI.

Report of the Committee of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church upon the proposal of the American Bible Society with regard to the Translation of the Old Testament into Japanese.

The Committee appointed to consider and report upon the proposal of the American Bible Society, forwarded to this Board under date of April 11, 1882, respectfully report:—

The proposition of the American Bible Society is contained in the following letter from the Cor. Secretary, with the appended "Conclusions reached by their Committee on Versions":—

American Bible Society,

Bible House, Astor Place, New York, *April* 11, 1882.

Rev. F. F. Ellinwood, D.D.

Dear Brother:—We have had intimations both from London and Yokohama that there is a desire in Japan to have the work of translating the Old Testament promoted by the combined resources of the Bible Societies of America, England, and Scotland, and that Dr. Hepburn, Dr. Greene, and Mr. Fyson should be associated with Dr. Verbeck in the work.

We are well aware that your Board has taken special satisfaction in doing its part on the New Testament version without asking for pecuniary assistance from this Bible Society, and we have always been glad to recognize and, if need be, to assert your joint interest with this Society in the perfected work. What you may prefer to do in respect to the Old Testament is, of course, for you to decide. The position of our managers in respect to the new suggestions which come to us, is indicated by the enclosed paper containing the conclusions reached by our Committee on Versions and approved by our Board at its last meeting.

Yours fraternally,

Edward W. Gilman,

Corresponding Secretary.

1. A small company of competent scholars well versed in Hebrew and conversant with Japanese, who shall statedly devote the greater part of their time to translation work, would most efficiently accomplish the desired object.

2. Should such a company be organized and charged with the sole responsibility for translating into Japanese such parts of the Old Testament as remain untranslated, and should the missionary societies with which they are severally connected solicit aid from the American Bible Society, this Committee sees no reason why such request should not be granted.

3. A plan by which two-fifths of the expense which may be incurred during a period of four years shall be assumed by the American Bible Society, two-fifths by the British and Foreign Bible Society, and one-fifth by the National Bible Society of Scotland, is to be approved.

4. In case such liberal provision is made for perfecting this much-desired work, it is obviously just that the responsibility for the custody and conservation of the version should rest chiefly with the Societies at whose cost it is perfected and published.

In order to an intelligent decision, the history of the case must be understood. But before passing to such a historical statement, it may be proper to advert to two particulars in the foregoing papers:—

1. The reference to "new suggestions" which are represented as having been made to the American Bible Society, asking for a change in the method for providing the translation of the Old Testament into Japanese, strikes us with surprise. It is a matter of general information that a Permanent Committee was appointed to this work more than four years ago, by a Convention of representatives of the Protestant missions in Japan, in which also the three Bible Societies on the ground were represented. To this Permanent Committee, and the rules adopted by them, was the whole preparation and publishing of the Old Testament consigned. They have been all this time, and still are, engaged on this work, to the general satisfaction of all concerned. And none desire, that we are aware of, that the translation should be put into any other hands, or subjected to any other oversight than that of this Permanent Committee, whose duties and privileges were clearly defined by that Convention.

2. The language of the letter referring to this Board, although very courteous, is somewhat defective in not fully stating the facts. It is not only true that this Board did not ask the aid of the American Bible Society in the translation of the New Testament; but it went further, and actually declined the Society's aid when offered, and that for reasons which the Board at the time deemed to be very important, and which still are applicable as to the present proposal.

We proceed now with the history of the case, as follows:—

More than ten years ago the translation of the New Testament into Japanese was undertaken; our own missionary, Dr. Hepburn, having been from the beginning largely identified with it. Whatever individual efforts may have been made beforehand, that which gave stability and strength to the undertaking was the Convention called in the year 1872 for this purpose. The Convention was composed of Protestant missionaries, and a Committee was appointed by them representing the several Protestant denominations. This Committee was charged with the translation of the New Testament into Japanese. It was known as the Yokohama Committee. The Committee was

thoroughly catholic in its character and aim, and from the beginning worked with the expectation that the results of their labours, when completed, would be common property to all the missions; nor was any other view entertained by it or others, until much later on restrictions as to property in the work were suggested by *some not in connection with the enterprise at the outset.*

As an important item in the history, it must now be noted that it was *after considerable progress* had already been made in the translation by this Committee, that the American Bible Society engaged in the work. Indeed, one or two of the earlier publications of the Committee had been *published by subscription from the different missions* (*American* and *British*) BEFORE the American Bible Society's connection with the Committee. The American Bible Society entered the field. It proposed to bear the expenses of the undertaking, and OFFERED [*not from the earnest appeals of the A. B. C. F. M. and Reformed Boards*] the several Missionary Societies to make use of their men for the purpose, and to pay the salaries of these men during the time occupied. Some [*two out of six*] of these Societies consented, and gave their missionaries to be labourers for the American Bible Society for the time being. Indeed, it was afterward claimed that a "contract" had been made by the American Bible Society with the Missionary Boards of two of the translators on September 1, 1875, and in July, 1876, on the condition "that the version, while in progress and when completed, should be regarded as the property of the American Bible Society." This revelation created great surprise. Let it now be distinctly observed that, while certain other Missionary Societies consented, our own Board declined the proposal. Its reasons are on record. It decided that it was best, for these reasons, that Dr. Hepburn should still remain as our missionary while engaged in this work, and be supported by us as before. And, in fact, this has been done throughout to the present time. As the event proves, this action has been of the greatest service in the independent position which it has given to our missionaries interested during the painful discussion which followed, and also in placing ourselves where we can deal with the principles involved without being trammelled by any previous action.

The Translating Committee, thus partly supported by the American Bible Society after it had joined in the enterprise, and partly otherwise, continued at the work.

Very soon after the first payment by the American Bible Society, it began to be rumoured that upon the completion of the work the Society intended to lay claim, not to the "copyright," for that word it seems it disclaimed, but to what amounted to the same thing, the conservation of the text, as it was called, and the sole right of revision; which meant, practically, the exclusive right to print and publish; and to prohibit any other Bible Societies, or persons, from the same right, except as the American Bible Society chose to grant it in a given case.

It is now to be noted, as another important fact in the history, that the Protestant missionaries generally opposed this claim from its very first announcement, and demanded that the original intention of the Translating Committee should be adhered to, and that the version, when completed, should be open to all.

Things continued in this state until the year 1878—six years later. At this time the translation of the New Testament was nearly completed, and on

the eve of publication; and also some work had been done by a Committee in Tokio, in translating the Old Testament. In this year, 1878, a Convention was called, on the initiative of the missionaries of the A. B. C. F. M. at Kobe. It afterward met at Tokio, May 10 to 13, 1878. It was composed of Delegates from all the Protestant missions in Japan, and its object was to take steps for a Union effort to secure a translation of the Old Testament Scriptures. The proceedings of this Convention were published, and are now before your Committee. It is not stated in the call, nor in the proceedings, but the whole tenor of the resolutions adopted suggests that the origin of the Convention lay in the desire that no similar question might exist in reference to the translation of the Old Testament, as had sprung up in regard to the New Testament. At this Convention a series of resolutions was presented, and thoroughly discussed for three days; and, after some amendments, adopted. These resolutions, after giving cordial acknowledgment to the worth of the work upon the Old Testament already accomplished by the Tokio Translation Committee, erected what was termed a Permanent Committee, to be elected from the several missions, to whom was entrusted the whole project of translating the Old Testament, and for the conservation of the text. The 5th, 6th, and 8th of these resolutions are as follows:—

"(5.) That when any translation shall have been completed by any committee to whom it has been assigned, it shall be forwarded to the Permanent Committee, and by that Committee be placed in the hands of the General Revising Committee, who shall so far revise the names and terms introduced as shall make the translations uniform in these respects, and upon their favourable report and the general approval of the Permanent Committee, it shall be published by arrangement with the Bible Societies represented in this Convention, under the supervision of the Permanent Committee, as the Authorized Version.

"(6.) That after the publication of the first edition under the supervision of the Permanent Committee, each Bible Society represented in this Convention shall be permitted to print and publish such editions as its agent may deem desirable, provided that the text of the authorized edition be not departed from, it being distinctly understood that any translations put forth by the Permanent Committee are the common property of all Protestant missionaries.

"(8.) That all matters connected with the translation and publication of the Old Testament, not specifically provided for in the foregoing resolutions, are understood to be left entirely to the discretion of the Permanent Committee."

That fears were already greatly excited by the projected claim of the American Bible Society, in reference to the New Testament Version, is very manifest. First, from the fact that this Convention *declined the basis of the first call by the Kobe missionaries, on the ground that this call limited the Convention's discussions to the matter of the Old Testament translation;* and the Convention was organized upon the basis of a second call issued April 10, 1878—nearly three months after the first, and which left the way open for the "discussion of any matters of common interest"—and, secondly, from the fact that the Convention, after passing the resolutions in detail in reference to the Permanent Committee and the Old Testament, proceeded to pass several resolutions in reference to the New Testament Version. After recording its deep sense of the value of the services rendered by the Yokohama Translation Committee and expressing the hope that

it will soon complete the translation of the New Testament, it adopts the three following resolutions:—

(2.) "In the opinion of this Convention the translation of the New Testament produced by the Yokohama Committee ought to be considered the common property of the Protestant missionaries labouring in this country, and that the Bible Societies represented in this Convention ought to have an equal right to publish the same.

(3.) "In the opinion of this Convention all *future* productions of the Yokohama Committee ought to be published jointly by the Bible Societies represented in this Convention, upon the motion of the Permanent Committee, and that on the completion of the New Testament the conservation of the text ought to be vested in the Permanent Committee.

"*Resolved*, That this Convention recommend that the work of translating and publishing the New Testament be brought into harmony with the principles now adopted in relation to the Old Testament, under the supervision of one Permanent Committee."

This was agreed to by the translators of the New Testament; *and they, therefore, afterward placed the version for custody in the hands of the Permanent Committee appointed by this Convention.*

Notwithstanding all this, the American Bible Society would not yield its claim. As a consequence, a great deal of controversy and of hard feeling arose. Concessions, however, were made, and it was at the time hoped that the controversy was settled and the claim abandoned. It was, however, only deferred. The New Testament Version was at length published. As soon as it was published the American Bible Society again advanced its claim. It insisted on its exclusive right to conserve the text, and that the other Bible Societies could publish only by its permission. Indeed, it went so far as to demand of the National Bible Society of Scotland by what right it had printed the Gospel of Mark in raised letters for the blind. This again revived the ill-feeling. Protestant missionaries of all denominations opposed the claim of the American Bible Society. The British missionaries did so most prominently, as was very natural, seeing that the right of their Bible Societies was especially challenged. But the opposition was in no sense confined to them. The controversy was not between the American Bible Society and the British missions, but between the Bible Society *and all the missionaries.* Our own missionaries opposed the Bible Society's claim emphatically. Repeated communications from our mission have been forwarded to this Board, especially one sent last January, which embraced several very important documents, including a printed history of the case, the proceedings of the Convention at Tokio, and a clear statement of the facts in the case, together with a summary of the arguments on both sides, prepared by a committee appointed by our mission, and also a letter of our mission to the Permanent Committee, setting forth certain principles in the case, which that Committee adopted. The American Bible Society preferred its claim on the ground that it had *incurred so large an expense. The missionaries denied any right on this ground, inasmuch as others, and particularly our own Board, had been at an equal, or nearly equal, outlay;* that the work had been begun before the American Bible Society had come in; that there had been no hint of such a claim until the American Bible Society,

after joining, had made it; and that the claim had been resisted from the first. The American Bible Society, however, continued to press its demand, challenged the propriety of the other Societies to print and publish, and at length proceeded to appoint its own Committee of Revision for detecting and removing errors in the translation, ignoring the Permanent Committee, which had been invested by the Convention with the power of Revision. In this Revision Committee of the American Bible Society, Dr. Hepburn, the oldest and most responsible translator, to whom all were indebted for the larger share of the work, he having translated, it is said, 583 out of the 773 pages, was invidiously omitted. This appointment of a rival Committee of Revision threatened to bring two rival versions before the public. This has been happily avoided, however, by circumstances beyond the control of the Bible Society which have prevented the execution of its purpose. The Revision Committee appointed by the Bible Society were Dr. Verbeck, Dr. D. C. Greene, and Bishop Williams. Dr. Verbeck agreed to serve, if the other two would serve. These gentlemen, however, both declined, and this extinguished the Bible Society's Committee. Meantime the Committee of Revision appointed by the Permanent Committee reported. Their report was adopted. And the result now is, that if the American Bible Society accepts their report and prints their corrections of the text, the position of the Bible Society is abandoned. As they can hardly avoid adopting these corrections, the controversy as to the New Testament is, it is hoped, *virtually* settled—*virtually*, not formally, as we had hoped. For, contrary to the report published, the American Bible Society has never formally receded from its ground that the conservation of the text of the New Testament belongs to it. Still, we hope it is virtually settled as to that Testament. This leads us to the present phase of the matter.

As already remarked, the translation of the Old Testament into Japanese had been in progress before the Convention of 1878. It has been so especially since that time by the labours of the appointed Permanent Committee, representing all the Protestant Societies in Japan. The American Bible Society now proposes to assume the same function of preparing at its own expense the translation of the Old Testament, and of thereupon claiming the right to the translated text of the Old Testament which it made in reference to the New. In the present instance, however, it has sought, and in a certain sense obtained, the concurrence of the two other Bible Societies (British and Foreign and the Scotch National), in sharing the expense and also the rights claimed in consequence. It must, however, be understood that these other Bible Societies have consented only with the distinct understanding that what they do shall be "in connection with the Permanent Committee and subject entirely to its rules."

The Paper before the Board is the proposal of the American Bible Society to us to become a party to this arrangement. As already stated, the Board has before declined a similar proposition. It is now presented anew in the present form.

The communication of the Bible Society does indeed state the case as if its aid were merely a problematical question conditioned upon the several Bible Societies being *invited* by the Missionary Societies to assume the expense; and argues that in case of their assuming the expense on such an invitation, justice would require that the Bible Societies should hold the title to the translation.

It should, however, be said, in reply to this method of stating the case, that the contingency of the several Bible Societies being *invited* to incur the expense, need not come into consideration at all, inasmuch as none, that we are aware of, are solicitous that the Bible Societies should undertake this work. On the contrary, it appears to us that all the steps toward it have been taken by the American Bible Society's own motion; and that, too, in presence of the fact that the Permanent Committee has been, and still is, already engaged on the work, upon the conditions agreed to four years ago by the Convention which appointed it, and is doing the work satisfactorily, we believe, to all the Missionary Societies.

After duly considering the whole subject, your Committee are clearly agreed that the proposition of the American Bible Society should be respectfully declined.

The following, among other reasons, satisfy us of the propriety of this course:—

1. The proper function of the Bible Society has ever been to print and circulate the Scriptures, and not to engage in their translation, which belongs more properly to other parties.

2. On the other hand, as missionaries are sent out for the express purpose of evangelizing the heathen, and must necessarily learn their language, the translation of God's Word into the vernacular of any country is most appropriately their work and that of the Societies which commission them. And this work is not to be delegated by them to other Associations.

3. In any attempt of the Bible Societies to execute the work of translation, they must necessarily have recourse to the men who have been commissioned, and for years have been sustained, by the Missionary Societies while learning the language. And it does not seem to be necessary, wise, or expedient that any Bible Society should interfere and subsidize these prepared instruments, to accomplish a work which can be done much better by the translators in connection with their own Missionary Societies.

4. The choice of the most suitable men for the execution of this difficult and critical work of translating is a most important matter; and we think it must be evident that the members of the several missions on the ground, who know the men, are far more competent to make a wise selection for this work than would be any agent of the Bible Society sent there, or by those in the offices at home.

5. The experience of the church dictates it, as the wise course, when a translation or revision of the Scriptures is to be undertaken, that it should be done, not by the different Bible Societies, but by competent men chosen by the denominations of the church at large. Our own late revision is a case in point.

6. It seems to be unquestionable that when an accurate translation of the Scriptures into the tongue of any heathen nation is accomplished by the joint labours of various Protestant denominations, it should lie freely open, without restriction, to all the denominations which have been engaged in it.

Your Committee therefore recommend that the American Bible Society be respectfully informed, in reply to its communication, that this Board deems it altogether unwise to solicit the aid of the Bible Societies in the proposed

work of translation, or in any way to encourage them to proceed in it; and further, that the Board is satisfied that the translation of the Old Testament Scriptures into Japanese should be left entirely in the hands of the Permanent Committee in Japan already charged with the work, and be subject to its rules.

WILLIAM M. PAXTON,
CHAS. K. IMBRIE,
CHAS. H. PARKHURST,
} *Committee.*

NEW YORK, *November* 13, 1882.